

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress

1st Session

Vote No. 54

March 18, 1999, 2:31 p.m.

Page S-2915 Temp. Record

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL/China and the World Trade Organization

SUBJECT: Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act for fiscal year 1999 . . . S. 544. Stevens motion to table the Hutchinson amendment No. 89.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 69-30

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 255, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act for fiscal year 1999, will provide \$1.894 billion in new budget authority (\$1.563 billion in emergency appropriations and \$331 million in non-emergency appropriations), and will offset the cost by passing \$1.894 billion in rescissions and program deferrals. A total of \$977 million will be given in disaster assistance to South American countries, \$100 million will be given to Jordan, and \$308 million will be given for agricultural relief (twice as much as was requested). Also, the Federal Government will be barred from taking ("recouping") approximately \$19 billion from the States out of the funds that they have won in settlement of their suits against tobacco companies.

The Hutchinson amendment would bar the United States Government from supporting the admission of the People's Republic of China as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) unless a law was first enacted that specifically allowed the United States to support such admission. Such a proposed law would be considered under certain expedited procedures.

Debate was limited by unanimous consent. After debate, Senator Stevens moved to table the Hutchinson amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

Many of us share most of the concerns expressed by supporters of the Hutchinson amendment. Others of us believe that the President's policy of constructive engagement has been successful and should continue to be followed. We agree, though, that at this time, for both reasons of procedure and policy, the Hutchinson amendment should be rejected.

On procedural grounds, this amendment should not have been offered to an emergency foreign assistance appropriations bill. The

(See other side)

YEAS (69)				NAYS (30)		NOT VOTING (1)	
Republican (30 or 56%)		Democrats (39 or 87%)		Republicans (24 or 44%)	Democrats (6 or 13%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hagel	Akaka	Kerrey	Ashcroft	Conrad	McCain ⁻²	
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Kerry	Bunning	Dorgan		
Bennett	Jeffords	Bayh	Kohl	Burns	Feingold	EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE: 1—Official Business 2—Necessarily Absent 3—Illness 4—Other SYMBOLS: AY—Announced Yea AN—Announced Nay PY—Paired Yea PN—Paired Nay	
Bond	Lugar	Biden	Landrieu	Collins	Hollings		
Brownback	Mack	Bingaman	Lautenberg	Coverdell	Torricelli		
Campbell	McConnell	Boxer	Leahy	Craig	Wellstone		
Chafee	Murkowski	Breaux	Levin	Crapo			
Cochran	Nickles	Bryan	Lieberman	DeWine			
Domenici	Roberts	Byrd	Lincoln	Enzi			
Fitzgerald	Roth	Cleland	Mikulski	Grassley			
Frist	Smith, Gordon	Daschle	Moynihan	Hatch			
Gorton	Stevens	Dodd	Murray	Helms			
Gramm	Thomas	Durbin	Reed	Hutchinson			
Grams	Voinovich	Edwards	Reid	Inhofe			
Gregg	Warner	Feinstein	Robb	Kyl			
		Graham	Rockefeller	Lott			
		Harkin	Sarbanes	Santorum			
		Inouye	Schumer	Sessions			
		Johnson	Wyden	Shelby			
		Kennedy		Smith, Bob			
				Snowe			
				Specter			
				Thompson			
				Thurmond			

Compiled and written by the staff of the Republican Policy Committee—Larry E. Craig, Chairman

Senate should not be put in the position of having to vote on such a complex issue after just a few minutes of debate. The proper course to have followed would have been to submit a bill that would have been referred to the Finance Committee for consideration. The Finance Committee has handled trade issues since the founding of this country, and it has great expertise in the area. If legislation had been introduced, hearings could have been held and amendments could have been considered. We understand that our colleagues have bypassed the normal route because they are concerned that the Administration intends to announce its support for China's admission to the WTO, but we have been consulting closely with Administration officials on this matter and we can assure our colleagues that the United States and China are not even close to an agreement.

On policy grounds we oppose this amendment as well. Congress' prior approval has never before been required before the President could support the admission of a country to the WTO. This amendment clearly singles out China for punitive treatment, and the reasons have less to do with trade than with political, human rights, and national security concerns. This amendment would thus be a marked change from our longstanding policy of having the Executive Branch, as a ministerial manner, decide when a country's trade policies meet world standards for WTO membership. We should not deviate from that standard.

Many supporters of the Hutchinson amendment take note only of China's abuses. Those abuses are real, but they tell only part of the story. China, after thousands of years of autocratic rule, has begun to move toward both free markets and democracy. Many of us who oppose this amendment believe that the pace of changes, which have included free local elections, the gradual establishment of the rule of law, and the encouragement of private enterprise, has been extraordinary.

Some of us are convinced that continuing to draw China into the world economy will lead to economic, political, human rights, and national security reforms in China. Others of us share many of the concerns expressed by the supporters of this amendment. We agree, though, that for reasons of procedure and policy, this amendment should be tabled.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

In an ideal world, or even just under normal political circumstances, the Hutchison amendment would not be necessary and would not be appropriate. Unfortunately, it is vitally necessary in this instance to ensure that our current President does not betray United States' interests and principles. Without this amendment, President Clinton is likely to agree, for political reasons, to support China's admission into the WTO under much lower standards than all other WTO countries have had to meet as a condition of membership. President Clinton loves his media events, and recently all of his top diplomatic and trade officials have been having constant meetings with top Chinese officials. Those negotiations are on the conditions that will have to be met before the United States will support China's admission. China is not even close to meeting any of the economic requirements that all other countries have met, but it has made very clear that it thinks it should be let into the WTO anyway. Once it became a member, it would gain huge new trade benefits while at the same time it would be allowed to continue its current unfair trade practices. It would then not have any incentive to meet world standards on trade. It would continue to get richer at the rest of the world's expense, and especially at the United States' expense, without making any reforms.

China runs huge annual trade deficits against the United States. Those deficits have been growing exponentially, hitting a record \$57 billion last year on just \$80 billion in trade. China is rapidly turning itself into a new superpower world menace with that American money. Some American businesses, and, to a lesser extent, some American farmers, have been benefitting from the trade with China, despite the huge imbalance. They have argued for a continuation and expansion of the United States' current trade policies with China, and they have urged the United States to refrain from criticizing any of the Chinese communist government's many abhorrent and dangerous policies. Most politicians have taken that advice, and none more enthusiastically and completely as President Clinton. President Clinton has called his policy "constructive engagement."

China is a barbaric communist nation that may well pose greater dangers to the United States than any other country. It jails and tortures, and murders, anyone who advocates democracy or human rights; it jails and tortures, and murders, Christians, Buddhists, and Moslems because of their faith; it has an evil "one-child" policy that has resulted in widespread forced abortions and sterilizations; it uses slave labor and engages in unfair trade practices and intellectual property theft; it threatens its neighbors with military attack and occupies Tibet, where it is engaged in an ongoing genocidal campaign against the Tibetan people; it sells missile technology, and possibly nuclear technology, to dangerous, unstable regimes; its military was recently caught trying to sell thousands of machine guns and surface to air missiles to Los Angeles street gangs; and there is evidence that it subverted our democracy in the last presidential election by making illegal contributions to the Democratic Party. Most recently, we have learned that through espionage it has stolen the technology needed to make the W-88, which is the United States most advanced nuclear warhead.

Given this background, should Congress really leave for the Easter recess when it knows that President Clinton has been talking with China about the United States giving its approval of China joining the WTO, and that he will have a high-level summit with Chinese officials during the recess? Many of us will not support such membership until China changes its brutal and dangerous policies, but we know a majority of Senators think that only trade issues should be considered. However, we think that a majority if not all Senators should agree that the rules should not be bent for China to join the WTO without at least implementing the same trade reforms that every other member of the WTO has adopted. No one denies that Congress has the constitutional authority for determining trade policies. We urge our colleagues to exercise that authority before President Clinton betrays United States interests by supporting China's admission to the WTO.